GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2061
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2017
Suicide by Farmers
Adsul Shri Anandrao ;Chavan Shri Harishchandra Deoram;Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram;Gaikwad Prof. Ravindra Vishwanath;Jadhav Shri Prataprao Ganpatrao;Mahendran Shri C.;Patil Shri Shivaji Adhalrao;Raut Shri Vinayak Bhaurao;Reddy Shri J.C. Divakar;Reddy Shri Y. S. Avinash;Shinde Dr. Shrikant Eknath;Siddeshwara Shri Gowdar Mallikarjunappa;Teli Shri Rameswar;Tumane Shri Krupal Balaji

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether crop failure, indebtedness, inadequate remunerative prices for farm produce and drought are the main reasons for suicide by farmers in the country and if so, the details thereof and the response of the Government thereto;

(b) whether the present policy for tackling the suicide cases of farmers is ineffective and if so, the response of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Hon'ble Supreme Court has recently suggested the Government to bring out a national policy over the farmer suicides and evolve a mechanism to protect their crops from natural calamities/disaster and a holistic approach for their well being and if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) whether the Government has prepared any specific plan/policy to prevent suicide by the farmers in the country and if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a) to (d): The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and disseminates information on suicides, in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI). These Reports on suicides upto 2015

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are available at its website. As per ADSI Report, 'Bankruptcy or Indebtedness' and 'Farming Related Issues' are reported as major causes of suicides among farmers/ cultivators. The other prominent causes of farmers/ cultivators suicides are Family Problems, Illness, etc.

Agriculture is a State subject and the State Governments take appropriate measures for development of agriculture in the State. State Governments are primarily responsible for the growth and development of agriculture sector in their respective States. However, the Union Government is according high priority for its progress and for improving the welfare of the farmers. Government of India has taken several steps to revitalize agriculture sector and improve economic condition of farming community on sustainable basis by increasing investment, improving farm practices, creating rural infrastructure and delivery of credit, technology and other inputs, such as, extension, marketing, etc. Keeping in mind the dependence of a large section of India's society on agriculture and also the need for ensuring food and nutrition security, the Government supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support. To this end, Government of India has taken several steps, which, inter-alia, include the following schemes/programmes, viz: Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market scheme (e-NAM).

Further, the Government provides interest subvention of 3% on short-term crop loans up to Rs.3.00 lakh. Presently, loan is available to farmers at an interest rate of 7% per annum, which gets reduced to 4% on prompt repayment. Further, under Interest Subvention Scheme 2015-16, in order to provide relief to the farmers on occurrence of natural calamities, the interest subvention of 2% shall continue to be available to banks for the first year on the restructured amount and such restructured loans shall attract normal rate of interest from the second year onwards as per the policy laid down by RBI. The said provision is continued in the Interest Subvention Scheme of the year 2016-17. The benchmark for initiating relief measures by banks has also been reduced to 33% crop loss, in line with the National Disaster Management Framework.

In order to ensure that all eligible farmers are provided with hassle-free and timely credit for their agricultural operations, the Government has introduced the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme, which enables them to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc. and draw cash to satisfy their consumption needs. The KCC Scheme has since been simplified by providing the farmers with ATM enabled debit card based on one-time documentation and built-in cost escalation in the limit, etc. Further, under the Interest Subvention Scheme, post-harvest loans against Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (NWRs) provided by

banks to Small Farmers / Marginal Farmers having Kisan Credit Card (KCC), are also available at the interest rate of 7% per annum for a period of upto six months, in order to discourage distress sale of produce by small and marginal farmers.

In order to bring small, marginal, tenant farmers, oral lessees, etc. into the fold of institutional credit, Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) have been promoted by banks.

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Under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), which has been introduced from Kharif 2016, the farmers have to pay only nominal premium of only 2% for all Kharif crops, 1.5% for all Rabi crops and 5% for annual commercial and horticultural crops and the balance is paid by the Government under PMFBY. This scheme provides insurance cover at all stages of the crop cycle including post-harvest risks, in specified instances. The scheme is a protection shield against instances of farmer suicides because of crop failures or damage due to natural calamities.

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is also notified for both Kharif and Rabi crops based on the recommendations of the Commission on Agriculture Costs & Prices (CACP). The Commission collects & analyses data on cost of activation and recommends MSP. The Government has also declared bonus on pulses for Kharif 2016 over and above the approved MSP. Even during last year, Government offered bonus over and above the MSP in case of pulses. Further, the Government undertakes procurement of wheat and paddy under its 'MSP operations'. In addition, Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities not covered under the MSP Scheme, on the request of State/UT Government. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has recently suggested the Government to consider all possible options for well being of the farmers. The steps taken in this regard by the Government are as stated above.

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